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Message Text

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E.O. 11652: XGDS-2

TAGS: PARM, TECH, IAEA

SUBJECT: NEW YORK TIMES ARTICLE ON NUCLEAR SUPPLIERS ACTIVITIES

REF: PARIS 6923

1. FRENCH EMBASSY MINISTER DE LA GORCE CALLED ON PM DIRECTOR VEST TO CONVEY MFA SCIENTIFIC DIRECTOR DE NAZELLE'S DISPLEASURE AND CONCERN REPORTED REFTEL ABOUT DAVID BINDER'S ARTICLE IN THE NEW YORK TIMES OF 29 FEBRUARY. DE NAZELLE WISHED TO POINT OUT THAT SOME INFORMATION IN ARTICLE MUST HAVE COME FROM A LEAK AND THAT IT WAS DISTURBING BECAUSE OF AGREED CONFIDENTIALITY OF SUCH DISCUSSION. ALSO THE TONE OF THE ARTICLE, ALONG WITH OTHERS THAT HAVE APPEARED, HAS THE APPEARANCE OF A CAMPAIGN AGAINST FRENCH POLICY.
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2. FYI DE LA GORCE THEN SAID THAT DE NAZELLE ALSO WISHED TO CONVEY TO VEST ON A CONFIDENTIAL BASIS THAT HE SHOULD RECOGNIZE THE DANGER THAT ANY SUCH CAMPAIGN TO ALTER FRENCH POLICY COULD LEAD TO OPPOSITE RESULT BY STRENGTHENING THE HAND OF THOSE IN GOF OPPOSED TO MULTILATERAL COOPERATION. END FYI.

3. DE LA GORCE ALSO REPORTED THAT DE NAZELLE WISHED TO POINT OUT A NUMBER OF INACCURACIES IN BINDER ARTICLE. REGARDING SALE OF REPROCESSING, THE US HAD MADE NO FORMAL PROPOSAL TO PROHIBIT THESE SALES. ON MULTINATIONAL CONCEPT FOR REPROCESSING, FRANCE AGREED TO THIS AS AN OBJECTIVE NOT AS COMPULSORY MATTER AND PRACTICALITY OF CONCEPT HAS NOT BEEN DEMONSTRATED. HOWEVER, FRANCE WAS READY TO ASSOCIATE WITH IT IF IT CAN BE IMPLEMENTED AS AGREED IN GUIDELINES. FRANCE HAD RESPECTED MULTILATERAL DISCUSSIONS, AND CONTRIBUTED IDEA OF SAFEGUARDS ON SENSITIVE TECHNOLOGY, AND SINCE SPRING OF LAST YEAR HAD IN FACT ADOPTED ATTITUDE IN CONFORMANCE WITH THE SUPPLIER GUIDELINES. IN PARTICULAR, THE FRENCH HAD SPECIFICALLY RENEGOTIATED ELEMENTS OF THE AGREEMENT WITH PAKISTAN TO BRING IT INTO CONFORMANCE WITH GUIDELINES.

4. VEST RESPONDED THAT DE LA GORCE SHOULD ASSURE DE NAZELLE WITH REGARD TO CONCERNS OF PARAS 1 AND 2 ABOVE, THERE WAS ABSOLUTELY NO CAMPAIGN TO ALTER FRENCH POLICY THROUGH MANIPULATION OF THE US PRESS. RATHER, A NUMBER OF SENATORS AND THEIR STAFFS ARE DEEPLY CONCERNED OVER THE NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION AND NUCLEAR EXPORTS. THESE CONCERNS WERE THEREFORE A NEWSWORTHY ITEM THAT WAS GETTING THE MOST PLAY IN THE NY TIMES AND WASHINGTON POST, PAPERS WITH THE GREATEST EUROPEAN EXPOSURE. VEST EMPHASIZED THAT WE WERE NEITHER ASSISTING IN NOR DID WE APPROVE OF THESE ARTICLES AND FULLY AGREED THAT SUCH PUBLICITY COULD BE DETRIMENTAL TO PURSUIT OF COMMON OBJECTIVES.

5. WITH REGARD TO POINTS RAISED IN PARA 3 ABOVE, VEST OBSERVED THAT WE FULLY RESPECT RESPONSIBLE AND CONSTRUCTIVE ATTITUDE OF FRANCE IN NUCLEAR SUPPLIER DISCUSSIONS IN CONFIDENTIAL

ACCEPTING GUIDELINES AND IN IMPLEMENTING THEM WITH REGARD TO SAFEGUARD CONDITIONS FOR PAKISTAN. WITH REGARD TO REPROCESSING QUESTION, HOWEVER, US POSITION AND ASPIRATIONS WITH REGARD TO NUCLEAR SUPPLIERS ON EXPORT OF SENSITIVE TECHNOLOGY WERE WELL KNOWN TO FRANCE ALTHOUGH PERHAPS NOT FORMALIZED IN A PROPOSAL BECAUSE OF CLEAR RELUCTANCE OF FRANCE AND OTHERS TO ACCEPT US POSITIONS.

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6. AS FINAL COMMENT, DE LA GORCE NOTED WITH SATISFACTION SECRETARY KISSINGER'S TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS COMMITTEE ON MARCH 9 AND HIS STRONG NEGATIVE RESPONSE TO SENATOR RIBICOFF'S SUGGESTION FOR US-USSR CONDOMINIUM TO FORCE FRANCE AND FRG TO ACCEPT MORE STRINGENT NUCLEAR EXPORT POLICY.
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